



Soco Transmission &lt;socotransmission@gmail.com&gt;

## New Comment Submission

EDAW Engage &lt;info@engage.edaw.com&gt;

Sat, Sep 5, 2009 at 9:33 AM

To: info@socotransmission.com, dennis.rankin@wdc.usda.gov, douglas.johnston@aeacom.com

A new comment has been submitted at [socotransmission.com](http://socotransmission.com).

### COMMENT

Meeting Attended:

Alamosa Scoping Meeting

Important Issues:

Land Use (Agriculture, Residential, Recreation), Water Resources (Floodplains, River Crossings), Historic and Cultural Sites, Radio or Television Interference, Noise, Health and Safety, Project Purpose and Need, Biological Resources, Visual / Aesthetic Resources, Other, Proximity to Residences  
OTHER: COST

Property Uses:

Agriculture, Residential, Conservation Easement, Other  
OTHER: LIFE SAVINGS AND FOCUS

Comment:

A project the cost and magnitude of Tri-State's transmission line is going to have enormous impact on the future of the San Luis Valley- citizens, environment, economics, socio-cultural heritage and lifestyle. At present-we are all at a crossroads. What an opportunity we have NOW to do a wondrous job of weighing in on all the options and paying into the future with the BEST POSSIBLE choices for energy technology and CONSERVATION measure available to us. Tri state included. There are a multitude of technologies that could be up and running within a matter of months to substantially help support the modern focus of greener energy consumption and reduced CO2 emissions. Those generation units could be placed much closer to the area of consumption. The transmission line is not needed and actually -works against those goals. According to your own data- the energy consumptive levels of the SLV have remained steady since 1994.

The Public Scoping meetings that Tri-state provided-have been "open house" in nature-with all the information coming from that paradigm, and no room for public discussion. It has dawned on many of us-that plans for the San Luis Valley-have pre-ceeded the knowledge or input to the citizens by a few YEARS. As our small group of concerned citizens drowns in deadline after deadline-(which hits with such rapidity that public discussion is almost impossible), we are overwhelmed with the amount of money and seeming political backup that fuels such a one sided approach.

I would like you to ponder the following INCOMPLETE list of serious issues that the San Luis Valley is facing. I realize that much of the future direction and solutions will concern internal valley politics-but there has been no time to even mobilize any sort of cohesive informational sharing effort-as counties are hit with applications, water issues are taking precedence, and solar is seemingly chucked under the table as "green"-(so quit complaining). The transmission line not only brings serious environmental and economic issues in and of itself-but is the critical gate way that will open up the valley for rampant solar development. The ramifications of which can be rather predictable at this point.

I-102-001

I-102-002

I-102-003

I-102-004

### I-102-001: Purpose and Need (In Review)

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Project purpose and need will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

### I-102-002: Public Involvement Process (In Review)

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. The project is in the planning and environmental review stages. Current project information will be available on the RUS project website, <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm> and the Utilities' project website, <http://www.socotransmission.com/>.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

### I-102-003: Environmental Consequences (In Review)

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Potential environmental consequences and mitigation measures from the proposed project will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

### I-102-004: Cumulative Impacts (In Review)

Your email/letter/comment card has been received and your comment noted. Potential cumulative impacts and mitigation measures will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in

<http://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=2&ik=760671f559&view=pt&search=inbox&msg=...> 9/8/2009

Concerns and questions which have not been answered in public forum or completely elsewhere are:

- I-102-005** | -The very real gateway to energy development that placement of the lines will allow. This will open up not only the subsequent problems listed, but will embrace "eminent domain" and "public good" within the definition of the population that do not have to live with the consequences.
- I-102-006** |
- I-102-007** | -Since "energy reliability" is the selling point-it seems a more prudent idea to funnel federal and rate payer dollars towards state and nationwide community generated independence. The "growing energy need" argument is moot-the total energy requirements in the San Luis Valley have remained steady since 1994. National, Reliable utility scale solar-wind-tide, corridors are abundant! There is terrific WORKING technology for energy production from waste. What is the sense in tearing up either public or productive agricultural land before looking at already denigrated lands closer to the source of higher need-which is the front range.
- I-102-008** | -What is the utility rate increase, for how many years to SLV customers? If LEAP statistics are right-utilities are already too high for a large percentage of your constituents...how is Colorado going to "pay double" to help them out?
- I-102-009** | -How will property devaluation secondary to placement of lines be compensated? Who is going to decide this? Has this been factored in to the "cost" of the lines? I think people deserve a REALLY fair compensation if their property is affected by the lines or solar generation plants-either in direct placement or view.
- I-102-010** | -How many "past construction phase" valley jobs can be expected out of this project? (if the present solar generators are any indication-one to two per plant-not significant employment for the amount of land and resources utilized.) Agriculture is a much higher employment base/resource use.
- I-102-011** | -Given our valuable international status as a home and migratory path to a variety of birds-what is the cost difference to bury the cables/ trench the cables? Can the SLV "offset" the proposed rate hike to cover some of the costs, through "royalty" payments on KWH produced? Maps of the cranes/wetlands area are smack in the middle of some of the proposed line/solar placements. If the present lines are already a steady source of bird deaths-(six or more a year of raptor/owl and crane deaths just around our immediate section)-can you even imagine the ramifications of higher and more powerful lines crossing the flight paths of THE NATIONS' migratory birds?
- I-102-012** |
- How vulnerable are the present water regulations to change-to accommodate future energy technology? How will they be regulated in regards to the present aquifer plans from the State Water Engineers office? Even "cleaning the panels" is going to require water....
- I-102-013** | -Utility solar seems intimately tied to this project-feeding "green" energy to the state grid- What percentage (kwh) is proposed for export purposes? (There is an Xcel proposal of 1100 megawatts at ten acres/megawatt) If it would only take about 7000 acres of solar and a "24 hour technology plant" to serve the valleys reliability issues-why is the massive planning for vast solar development not being thoroughly discussed?
- Each community is at a crucial point where they can discuss their consumptive/resource/ sustainability cycles-and we all have that opportunity now.
- I-102-014** | -Will the Valley get compensation from export, either through tax or kwh?
- Who is responsible for obsolete panels at life end? (which no one is talking about-especially in regards to toxicity?)
- I-102-015** | -Who will continue (and pay for) environmental impact studies and mitigation on the proposed corridors/sites? If the present studies have no clout to steer development of utility solar and transmission lines in a responsible manner-what recourse do we have if future studies show

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late 2010 and will be available at  
<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

### **I-102-005: Cumulative Impacts (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment card has been received and your comment noted. Potential cumulative impacts and mitigation measures will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement. The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at  
<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

### **I-102-006: Land Rights (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. The process of acquisition of land rights for the proposed project and mitigation measures will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement. The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at  
<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

### **I-102-007: Purpose and Need (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Project purpose and need will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement. The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at  
<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

### **I-102-008: Socioeconomic Resources (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Potential impacts to social and economic resources from the proposed project and mitigation measures will be addressed in the

denigration of environment and eco-systems?

-What plans are in place to pro-actively insist on energy conservation education and implementation? (Colorado poured \$800 million tax/donated dollars into utility assistance programs-2008!) The SLV is the perfect place to start looking at solar rotation within building permits, and a large push to upgrade insulation/windows etc....What can you-as our energy providers insist we implement in planning to encourage all communities to look at and mitigate their consumptive issues?

**I-102-016** | -Has anyone really thought about the impacts on socio-cultural, lifestyle and economics that the "gateway" of a transmission line is going to open up? I liken it to the Eisenhower tunnel and Summit County. Alamosa, Conejos, and Costilla counties - are now officially National Heritage Areas as proclaimed by the legislation sponsored by John Salazar. These areas have been "designated locales, authorized by Congress, to encourage preservation of historic, cultural and natural elements in places of distinctive human influence on the landscape. Paradoxical to transmission line development and vast solar fields.

Everything is happening so fast-solar generation plants going up, permits being sought from international corporations....which tells me that utility solar is the real issue behind the line proposal-effectively and quickly driving a potential nightmare for those of us who live here and those of you who visit us for our rural, agricultural and diverse ambience.

**I-102-017** | "Reliability of power" for the San Luis Valley has been the main "selling mantra" for transmission line construction. I believe that goal-for all Colorado and National communities- can be met in a much less expensive, less intrusive, less environmentally disastrous, more economically beneficial, and locally acceptable manner. I feel the purpose for the line is flawed-

\*overstating current and future demand (LOCAL evidence? again-it hasn't changed since 1994  
\*efficiency gains (pumping is proposed at a reduction of up to 40% to meet the upcoming water regulations) small solar generation is going up everywhere-effectively decreasing the consumptive pull, at economic benefit to YOU.

**I-102-018** | \*The line proposal ignores current technology that successfully supports community utility reliability, and distributive models, ignores the possibility of other community driven alternatives

**I-102-019** | \*doesn't provide hard evidence of how many actual blackouts have happened in the past 60 years...and glossing over the fact that we will still "face THAT issue" for at least five years before the line is even potentially available.

**I-102-020** | \*The COST is astronomical, and doesn't factor in the environment, community, property value or efforts by citizens that are supporting the goal of increased energy efficiency and distributive power investments, including the smart grid technology.

**I-102-021** | If the real purpose of the line is to invite and support solar development-then the Corridor Study should reflect that, and the SLV community should be given the lead in deciding if, and how much and where and when-industrial solar should proceed. Everyone in Colorado is talking about SLV solar development-despite the fact that you repeatedly utilize "reliability" for us as heart of the goal for transmission line development. This is dis-ingenuous and is breeding mistrust towards a win/win situation for consumers, energy providers and the environment that we all depend on.

**I-102-022** | I am beseeching that you take these thoughts and encourage that you-Tri-state-conduct a full examination of the potential for small and medium scale energy generation to meet our energy needs. I would like you to encourage Colorado to take the time in making SOUND energy decisions-first based on consumptive responsibility, and second on developing individually locally sustainable plans to address the critical energy issue. "Green" should really reflect more than CO2 emissions.

We are known as a "BEAUTIFUL, PRISTINE, HEALTHY, CULTURALLY DIVERSE, ECONOMICALLY DIVERSE, VIBRANT" state. (though we all know those aren't always true either)

Lets all help continue working towards those valiant goals to keep it that way.

Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

### **I-102-009: Socioeconomic Resources (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Potential impacts to social and economic resources from the proposed project and mitigation measures will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

### **I-102-010: Socioeconomic Resources (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Potential impacts to social and economic resources from the proposed project and mitigation measures will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

### **I-102-011: Project Alternatives (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. A range of reasonable project alternatives and mitigation measures including the no action alternative will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

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Thank you for your time and attention to this matter  
Sincerely,  
Claire Barker

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Name: Claire Barker  
Representing: Self/friends and fellow citizens against the line placement  
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State: CO  
Zip Code: 81146  
Phone Number: 719-378-2024  
Email Address: [bagranch@fairpoint.net](mailto:bagranch@fairpoint.net)  
Receive Newsletter: No

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**I-102-012: Wildlife (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Potential impacts to wildlife from the proposed project and mitigation measures will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at  
<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

**I-102-013: Purpose and Need (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Project purpose and need will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at  
<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

**I-102-014: Socioeconomic Resources (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Potential impacts to social and economic resources from the proposed project and mitigation measures will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at  
<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

**I-102-015: NEPA Process (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc. has requested financial assistance from the USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS), for their anticipated ownership interest in the proposed San Luis Valley – Calumet - Comanche Transmission Project. RUS has

<http://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=2&ik=760671f559&view=pt&search=inbox&msg=...> 9/8/2009

determined that funding Tri-State's ownership interest is a federal action requiring analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

RUS is the lead federal agency for NEPA, and will consult with other federal, state, and local agencies, and affiliated tribes as well as adhere to applicable regulations.

Additional information regarding the NEPA process can be found on the RUS project website at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/envIRON.htm>.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at

<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

**I-102-016: Socioeconomic Resources (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Potential impacts to social and economic resources from the proposed project and mitigation measures will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at

<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

**I-102-017: Purpose and Need (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Project purpose and need will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at

<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

**I-102-018: Project Alternatives (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. A range of reasonable project alternatives and mitigation measures including the no action alternative will be addressed in the

Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

**I-102-019: Purpose and Need (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Project purpose and need will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

**I-102-020: Environmental Consequences (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Potential environmental consequences and mitigation measures from the proposed project will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

**I-102-021: Purpose and Need (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment noted. Project purpose and need will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.

**I-102-022: Project Alternatives (In Review)**

Your email/letter/comment form has been received and your comment

noted. A range of reasonable project alternatives and mitigation measures including the no action alternative will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be completed in late 2010 and will be available at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>.